UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1990/5/Add.20
2 February 1994

Original: ENGLISH

Substantial session of 1994

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Initial reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Addendum

SURINAME

[17 November 1993]

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	GENERAL REMARKS	1 - 3	3
II.	POINTS RELATING TO SPECIFIC RIGHTS RECOGNISED IN THE COVENANT	4 - 146	3
Article 6	Right to work	4 - 13	3
Article 7	Right to just and favourable conditions of work	14 - 20	4
Article 8	Trade union rights	21 - 30	6
Article 9	Right to social security	31 - 64	8
Article 10	Protection of the family, mothers and children	65 - 78	13
Article 11	Right to an adequate standard of living	79 - 100	15
Article 12	Right to physical and mental health	101 - 116	19
Article 13	Right to education	117 - 135	21
Article 14	Primary education free of charge	136	25
Article 15	Right to take part in cultural life and enjoy the benefits of scientific progress	137 - 146	26

CONTENTS (cont'd.)

Annexes*

1. Constitution of the Republic of Suriname - 1987

2. The Bonaire Agreement - Protocol of conclusions of the discussions between the Government of the Republic of Suriname and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands concerning closer cooperation - Bonaire 15 and 16 November 1991

3. Document on Project Prison System, Ministry of Justice, 1992

4. Regulation on the Organization of the Surinamese Judicial System - Ministry of Justice, March 1990

5. Report of the Government of Suriname on the implementation of article 22 of the ILO Convention; period July 1989 to June 1992

6. Report of the Government of Suriname on the implementation of article 19 of the ILO Convention; period ending 30 September 1991

7. Employment and unemployment in the districts of Paramaribo and Wanica

8. Project proposal "Vocational training" - Ministry of Labour, Paramaribo, March 1993

9. Work programme of Project Sur/89/002 "Employment planning and policy formulation/implementation", draft revision, June 1992

10. Terms of reference, consultant on entrepreneurship and small enterprise development

11. Maternity Leave Act of August 1990

12. The Safety Act of 1947 of the Republic of Suriname

13. Report of the Government of Suriname on the implementation of ILO Convention No. 138

14. Statistics on school year 1990/91

---

* Available for consultation in the files of the Secretariat.

I. GENERAL REMARKS

1. Social cultural and economic rights in Suriname are guaranteed mainly by the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname of 1987 (hereinafter called "the Constitution") which replaced the 1975 Constitution, and became effective after independence was proclaimed on 25 November 1975.

2. Section VI of the Constitution (see annex 1) was inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and is entirely devoted to the social, cultural and economic rights of the individual. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (hereinafter called the Covenant) was used as the basis to enshrine these rights in the Constitution.

3. Almost all the rights which are specified in the Covenant are guaranteed in the Constitution. If not specified, additional laws or laws that were in effect prior to the effective date of the Constitution fill these gaps.

II. POINTS RELATING TO SPECIFIC RIGHTS RECOGNIZED IN THE COVENANT

Article 6: Right to work

4. Suriname is a party to the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) of the International Labour Organisation but not to the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). According to articles 19 and 22 of the Constitution, the Government of Suriname has submitted its reports to the Committee on International Labour Standards (see annexes 5 and 6).

5. Women and youth are the most disadvantaged groups with regard to employment (see annex 7).

6. The Ministry of Labour, with the assistance of the ILO, has set up a labour market information system. This system aims at providing the Ministry with information on trends in the labour market. The main objective for now is to create more jobs through the informal sector. For this reason the policy of the Ministry is focused on:

(a) Vocational training (training and retraining of workers);

(b) Assistance to own-account workers, small entrepreneurs and cooperatives;

(c) Providing financial assistance to small businesses in the informal sector through a so-called Social Investment Fund;

(d) Setting up a marketing and export board.

7. One of the measures is that financial and technical assistance will only be given to small entrepreneurs who are active in the productive sector. Furthermore, there are criteria for the quality and quantity of the produced goods. The criteria will determine periodically whether the entrepreneur will continue to receive assistance.

8. The Constitution of the Republic of Suriname ensures the freedom of choice of employment and also ensures that conditions of employment do not infringe upon fundamental political and economic freedoms of the individual. According to article 6, sections a and c, the social objectives of the State shall aim at:

> "(a) Identification of the potentialities for development of the own natural environment and augmentation of the capacities to increasingly expand those potentialities;
>
> "...
>
> "(c) Guaranteeing a government policy aimed at raising the standard of living and well-being of the society, based on social justice, the integral and balanced development of State and society."

9. Reference is made in this regard to the appended report "Project Vocational training" (see annex 8).

10. There are particular difficulties in attaining the objectives of full, productive and freely chosen employment.

11. With respect to this question, reference can also be made to the provisions in article 8 (section 2) and article 27 (section 1 (c)):

> Article 8, section 2:
> "No one may be discriminated against on the grounds of birth, sex, race, language, religion, origin, education, political beliefs, economic position or any other status".
>
> Article 27, section 1c:
> "It shall be the duty of the State to guarantee the right to work as much as possible by:
>
> "...
>
> "(c) guaranteeing equal opportunity in the choice of profession and type of work and forbidding that access to any function or profession be prevented on grounds of one's sex".

12. There are no cases indicating discrimination in employment or occupation in Suriname.

13. The ILO is assisting through an employment planning project in Suriname (see annex 8).

Article 7: Right to just and favourable conditions of work

14. Suriname is a party to the following ILO Conventions: Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14); Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81); Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957 (No. 106).

15. There is no wage-fixing machinery in Suriname, nor are there minimum wages.

16. In principle, there exists no inequality in remuneration for work of equal value. Reference can be made in this respect to article 28, section 1a of the Constitution, which states:

> "All employees have, independent of their age, sex, race, nationality, religion or political opinions, the right to:
>
> (a) Remuneration for their work corresponding to quantity, type, quality and experience on the basis of equal pay for equal work".

17. The following table gives the percentage of economically active persons in Paramaribo and Wanica (urban region), by working hours and sex (1986 and 1990):

Working hours	Male	Female	Male	Female
	1986		1990	
	%	%	%	%
< 15	19	81	16	84
15-34	26	74	26	74
35-39	59	41	48	52
40-43	71	29	61	39
44-47	80	20	71	23
> 47	86	14	77	23
Total	68	32	61	39

Source: General Bureau of Statistics. Household Survey.

18. The minimum conditions of occupational health and safety have been laid down in the Safety Act (see annex 12) and in article 28, sections (b), (c) and (d) of the Constitution which regulates the following:

> "All employees have, independent of age, race, nationality, religion or political opinions, the right to:
>
> "...
>
> "(b) The performance of their tasks under humane conditions in order to enable self-development;
>
> "(c) Safe and healthy conditions;
>
> "(d) Sufficient rest and recreation".

Civil servants are not excluded in the Safety Act.

19. All workers have equal opportunities according to the law.

20. Reference is made to the appended report "The Labour Act" (see annex 11). In this respect, reference can also be made to article 29, paragraph (b), of the Constitution:

> "It is in the duty of the State to indicate the conditions for work, remuneration and rest to which employees are entitled, especially by:
>
> "(a) Making regulations with regard to wages time of work, labour conditions and special categories of workers ..."

In addition, specific regulations have been laid down in the Surinamese Labour Act (see annexes 6 and 7).

Article 8: Trade union rights

21. Suriname is a party to the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151).

22. The substantive or formal conditions to join or form a trade union are laid down in article 30 of the Constitution:

> "1. Employees are free to establish trade unions to protect their rights and interests.
>
> "2. In exercising trade union rights, the following freedoms shall be guaranteed indiscriminately:
>
> (a) The freedom to join a trade union or not;
>
> (b) The right to participate in trade union activities.
>
> "3. Trade unions shall be bound by the principle of democratic organization and management, based on regular elections or their executive board by means of secret ballot."

So far, there are no cases known where trade unions faced other than the above-mentioned conditions when establishing a trade union. The same is true for persons who decide to join a trade union.

23. There are no legal provisions regarding the establishment of trade unions by certain categories of workers.

24. No restrictions are placed upon the exercise of the right of workers to join and form trade unions. All unions operate independently of the Government, while labour laws are applied uniformly throughout the country. Surinamese legislation prohibits anti-union discrimination by employers, and there are effective mechanisms for resolving complaints of such discrimination, among which the "Bemiddelingsraad" (National Mediation Council).

25. The trade unions in Suriname are free to federate. There are no legal limitations to this right. At present, there are five federated trade unions active in Suriname. These are the Moederbond, P.W.O., C.L.O., C47 and the OSAV. There are no legal or practical restrictions on the participation of trade unions in international trade union organizations. Trade unions participate regularly in regional and international meetings, for example the ILO General Conference meetings. The Moederbond, C47 and the C.L.O. are affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), while the OSAV is affiliated with the World Confederation of Labour.

26. The measures that are taken to secure and promote free collective bargaining are especially regulated in the Constitution, namely in article 31, which reads as follows:

> "1. The trade unions shall have the power to defend the rights and interests of the employees they represent and for whom they assume responsibility.
>
> "2. The trade unions shall participate in:
>
> (a) The preparation of labour legislation;
>
> (b) The creation of institutions of social security and other institutions aimed at serving the interest of employees;
>
> (c) The preparation for the control of the execution of the economic and social development plans at the national level.
>
> "3. Trade unions shall have the right to conclude collective labour agreements. The rules concerning the powers to conclude collective labour agreements and the sphere of application of their rules shall be determined by law."

27. As mentioned above, the right to collective bargaining is explicitly recognized by the Constitution and is reflected in several collective labour agreements, especially in the private sector. Collective bargaining agreements cover approximately 50 per cent of the labour force in Suriname.

28. The Ministry of Labour is preparing a project to collect data on the number and structure of trade unions in Suriname. At this stage, the relevant data are not yet available.

29. The right to strike is laid down in article 33 of the Constitution: "The right to strike is recognized subject to the limitations which stem from the law". Besides article 33 of the Constitution, there are no other legal provisions and jurisprudence concerning the right to strike. At the same time, there are no practical restrictions to the right to strike.

30. There are no further limitations on the exercise of the right mentioned in paragraphs 22 and 29 above by members of the armed forces, the police or the administration of the State. There have been no recent changes in the national legislation or administrative rules which affect the right to strike.

Article 9: Right to social security

31. Suriname is a party to the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102).

32. The following branches of social security exist in Suriname:

Medical care;
Cash sickness benefits;
Maternity benefits;
Old-age benefits;
Invalidity benefits;
Survivors' benefits;
Employment injury benefits;
Family benefits;
Financial aid for the poor and near-poor.

33. Social security protection can be broadly divided into the following categories:

(a) Statutory protection:

(i) Contributory schemes:*

- State Health Insurance Foundation (SZF);
- Universal Old-age Pension Fund (AOV);
- Civil servants' pensions scheme;

(ii) Non-contributory schemes:

- Medical care to the poor and near-poor (GHK);
- Social assistance to the poor (FB);
- Family allowances (AKB);

(iii) Employer liability schemes:

- Employment accident regulations of the Labour Code;
- Payment of wages and medical care costs during absence from work (Labour Code);

(b) Voluntary provisions:

(i) Collective agreements providing for sick pay, medical care, family allowances, termination of service compensation;

(ii) Private occupational pension schemes;

---

* The abbreviations used are those used in the Dutch language.

(iii) Private insurance;

(iv) Savings for retirement funds operated by banks and some employers.

Medical care

34. The SZF covers all expenses for curative medical care, hospital and laboratory services, drugs and part of the costs of optical lenses and frames for Government employees and pensioners and their families. Similar coverage is provided on a voluntary membership basis to employees of statutory bodies and their families. Costs are covered by premiums and by the Suriname Government.

35. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing covers all expenses for preventive and curative medical care for hospital services provided in public hospitals, for laboratory services and for drugs for the poor and the near-poor* and for those receiving financial aid (FB).

36. Cards (GHK) are issued to the poor people to obtain health care free of charge. The near-poor contribute a very small sum (Sf 3) per card. Cards are valid for a period of six months (one year for the elderly and disabled).

37. The Ministry of Health covers all expenses of the Medical Mission of the Moravian Church for preventive and curative primary health care and drugs for the population in the interior.

38. Private sector employees covered by collective labour agreements are generally entitled to free medical care, subject to certain limitations, for themselves and their families. There is a provision in the Labour Code relating to the payment of the costs of medical treatment for workers earning less than Sf 5 a day, but this provision has no current application.

Cash sickness benefits

39. In general, civil service regulations enable civil servants to receive full pay throughout absence due to sickness, provided that the absence is supported by a medical certificate. A civil servant who has been on sick leave for a long time (about six months) has to appear before a Government medical commission.

40. By virtue of the Labour Code, an employer is obliged to pay wages in full for a short period (interpreted as six weeks by the Labour Inspection) when an employee is incapable of work because of sickness or injuries received through an accident other than at work. Payment is not made if the incapacity does not last for at least two full days or if the worker has not worked for the employer for at least four months without interruption.

---

* Poor: family-income less than Sf 335 a month. Near-poor: family income Sf 335 up to Sf 500 a month.

41. Employees covered by collective labour agreements have improved benefit rights for sickness. Most agreements do not provide sick pay beyond 52 weeks.

Maternity benefits

42. Female civil servants used to be entitled to 12 weeks' absence (six before and six after confinement) without full pay (Labour Act 1973). In 1989 this article was revised by adding that full payment should be provided for 12 weeks' maternity leave ("Vrijstellingsbesluit 1989, S.B. 1990 No. 36").

43. Employees in the private sector with collective labour agreements have more or less the same form of maternity benefit. Female workers not covered by collective labour agreements have poor or no maternity benefit provisions.

Old-age, invalidity and survivors' benefits

44. By virtue of the Government Personnel Pension Ordinance (G.B. 1972, No. 50), all civil servants and their legitimate wives and children are covered by a contributory old-age, invalidity and survivors' pension scheme. Pensions are payable when the civil servant leaves owing to the fact that he has reached the age of 60, or has become an invalid, or has died.

45. Since 1973, there has been in existence a universal old-age pension scheme (AOV), revised and extended in 1981 (S.B. 1981 No. 30) and lately in 1992 (S.B. 1992 No. 48). Pensions are payable from age 60, regardless of means, marital status or employment situation, to citizens of Suriname and non-citizens who have been resident and have contributed to the scheme for at least ten years. The benefit is Sf 450 a month and is not affected by receipt of a pension from any other source. The scheme is funded partly by workers (19 per cent in 1992) and partly by the Government (81 per cent in 1992). Workers have to pay 2 per cent of their income as defined in the Income Tax Code 1922 up to age 60. The obligation to withhold the premiums rests with the employer.

46. A recent survey by the Ministry of Social Affairs showed that about 60 per cent of the elderly in Paramaribo are completely dependent on their AOV benefit.

47. There are a wide variety of pension schemes operating in the private sector. The schemes differ in many regards from one another.

Employment injury benefit

48. In general, absence from work due to an accident arising out of employment is not distinguished from sickness for civil servants and full payment of salary is made subject to medical evidence of incapacity. If a civil servant is permanently disabled as a result of an employment injury and forced to retire prematurely as a consequence, an invalidity pension is payable under the rules of the Civil Servants Pension Scheme.

49. The accident regulations of the Labour Code apply to all employers with the exception of agriculture, forestry, horticulture and cattle-breeding and all such employers are required to insure their employees against liability

arising from accidents at work or diseases contracted during employment. The Inspection Department of the Ministry of Labour sees to it that employers have been insured in accordance with the law. The insurance premiums are fixed by legislation.

Family benefits

50. All civil servants are entitled to family benefits for eligible children up to age 18. The amount is Sf 8 for the first child, Sf 7 for the second, Sf 6 for the third, and Sf 5 for the fourth and all other children up to the thirteenth.

51. Those who do not receive a family benefit from their employer are entitled to a benefit (AKB) for up to four children, provided that the child is under 18, unemployed and not married. The benefit is Sf 5 per child per month with a maximum of four children per family. The scheme is financed by the Government.

52. Through collective agreements many employers pay family benefits to their employees. In most such agreements the age limit is 18 with extension, in some agreements, to 21 or 26 depending on invalidity or full-time studentship. The amount per child varies from Sf 10 to Sf 47.50 a month. Most employers (65 per cent) pay over Sf 25 a month per child.

Financial aid for the poor and near-poor

53. Financial aid (FB) is available to those who have no, or a very small income. The income norms, as shown below, date from 1970:

- Singles (1st catetory):
  max. Sf 75 a month;
- Family, consisting of two persons (2nd catetory):
  max. Sf 100 a month;
- Family, consisting of three persons (3rd catetory):
  max. Sf 125 a month;
- Family, consisting of four persons (4th catetory):
  max. Sf 150 a month;
- Family, consisting of more than four persons (5th category):
  max. Sf 175 a month.

54. The scheme is still administered on a discretionary basis, but a new bill will hopefully be passed in due time. The amount of assistance is subject to a minimum of Sf 135 a month, and a maximum of Sf 450 a month. Disabled people between 21 and 60 years of age receive Sf 450 a month if they have no income and are 85 per cent unfit for labour. If a disabled person, younger than 21, forms part of a family entitled to Government assistance, the family receives Sf 337.50 a month. All expenses are covered by the Government, i.e. by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing.

55. In 1992, approximately 4 per cent of GNP was spent on social security, according to the Department of Research and Planning of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing. In 1982, approximately 2 per cent of GNP was spent on

social security, according to the ILO report "Planning of social security, project findings and recommendations", 1987.

56. In the non-contributory schemes additional social aid is provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing:

(a) Through its "Liefdadigheids Loterij Fonds" (Charity Lottery Fund) to cover the costs of, for example, medical treatment abroad if necessary, tools for people starting a new job, extraordinarily high water and electricity bills (max. three months), funeral costs (max. Sf 250);

(b) Through its "Fonds Geneeskundige Hulpapparaten" (Fund for Medical Aid Appliances);

(c) Through the annual school uniform and necessities programme;

(d) Financial aid for the benefit of minor children who live in foster homes;

(e) Alimentation for single women responsible for a family (only in crisis situations and without affecting her right to FB);

(f) Food for children up to age 6 in day-care centres.

For the above-mentioned additional aid benefits the poor and the near-poor and/or their children, costs are covered by the Government.

57. The socially vulnerable groups are:

(a) Single mothers caring for their children;

(b) The unemployed;

(c) Children;

(d) The elderly;

(e) The disabled (mentally and physically);

(f) Employees without general labour agreements;

(g) Refugees from the interior.

These groups are considered eligible for the non-contributory schemes. But given the socio-economic crisis situation facing Suriname today, the assistance given through this scheme does not really meet the needs.

58. People with an income just above the subsistence minimum are excluded from the non-contributory schemes. Facing the almost daily rising costs of living, they find themselves in a very difficult situation. Because of the increase of the AOV benefits, several people now have an income just above the subsistence minimum, whereby they are excluded from the FB benefits (and therefore GHK benefits, if their income exceeds Sf 600 per month).

59. Employees of small enterprises are likely to be excluded from the benefits provided by collective agreements. If their income is too high to be considered for the non-contributory schemes, they do enjoy the right to social security but to a significantly lesser degree.

60. Women do not necessarily enjoy the right to social security to a lesser degree than men: if they are employed, whether in the civil service or otherwise, they have the same rights as men. If they are unemployed they will be considered for financial aid for the poor and near-poor, provided they or their families fulfil the income conditions. A problem may arise when a woman applies for alimentation to support herself and her children, while she is married but not living together with her husband. In that case, she has to prove her husband is not supporting her, which might be difficult to do.

61. It is considered necessary to review the income norms by which the subsistence minimum is measured and to computerize the registration of the beneficiaries. The Government is planning to introduce a comprehensive social security system that offers more security to the population. It is also aiming at increasing the income of the socially vulnerable people by training and educating them.

62. In 1993 the Government increased the old-age benefit (AOV), the financial aid for the poor and near-poor (FB) and the family benefits (AKB). Also, the former school uniform programme has now been extended to contribute to the costs of school requisites and shoes for school-going children of the poor and near-poor. Several projects have started to train and educate people in order to make them socially less vulnerable.

63. Though the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups do get some more aid through these measures, not all are better off. This is due to severe inflation, which is a result of the present financial-economic crisis. Because the registration system is not computerized, it is difficult to check whether registered people are entitled to a certain benefit or not.

64. Changes in national legislation:

(a) In the AOV Code (SB 1981, No. 30, art. 5): the increase of the benefits is implemented with retroactive effect as from 1 January 1993. Also, the benefits are paid monthly instead of quarterly, as from January 1993;

(b) In the regulations concerning universal family benefits, the increase has been implemented with retroactive effect as from 1 January 1993.

Article 10: Protection of family, mothers and children

65. Suriname is not party to the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1938 (No. 138) (see annex 13).

66. The meaning of the term "family" in Surinamese society is rather extensive. It might mean a nuclear family of which we have many variations in Suriname, for example, the one-parent family or two-parent family, a foster family or adoptive family. The term is also used for the extended family. These are families where there are many people living together or who have

frequent intimate interaction in one house. Finally, there is the reorganized family. The reorganization takes place through (re)marriage or cohabitation of family members who have children by their former partners, i.e. families consisting of half-brothers and half-sisters and non-biological relatives, or family formed by small groups of women who take care of the children of one or more of them.

67. People in Suriname become of age when they turn 21.

68. The freedom to get married and to raise a family is guaranteed in the "Suriname Civil Code title 4, on Marriage". Article 81: "People get married by their own free will".

69. The Law on Weddings for Surinamese Citizens of Asian Origin, and the Wedding Decision, state that the minimum age for men and women to enter into marriage is, respectively, 15 and 13. The possibility within this law that a wedding partner can be appointed without the acknowledgement of the other partner may cause problems for both partners. The female, however, is usually in a more disadvantageous position.

70. In the Civil Code, rules are given concerning, among other things, marriage, family support, care and education of dependent children. These rules hold good with regard to all. A woman, left by the father of her children, is entitled to alimentation on behalf of her children, paid by the Government, if this father refuses to support his legitimate or legitimized children. The Government assists families by means of family benefits (see above). Other forms of family are recognized as well (see alimentation for children in foster homes). Grandparents, for instance, will get financial benefits besides their AOV if they can prove that they take care of a grandchild.

71. Working women who are entitled to maternity leave keep their full salary while they are on maternity leave. In article 35, section 6, of the Constitution the following is laid down: "Working women shall be entitled to paid maternity leave." In the fifth month of their pregnancy, women can obtain a so-called milk card, which entitles them to buy milk from the dairy factory. After delivery, this card is exchanged for an infant card, which entitles them to buy more milk. Both cards only guarantee the obtaining of milk, and do not imply a discount.

72. The right to maternity leave for female civil servants became law in 1973. Apart from Government employees, larger enterprises in the private sector which have negotiated a collective labour agreement with trade unions have facilities for maternity leave, with periods varying between 8 to 12 weeks and variations with regard to the continuation of the salaries. In analysing the collective labour agreements of 1988, the Ministry of Labour found that 89 per cent of the females under these agreements enjoyed maternity leave facilities. There is, however, still no general legislation on maternity leave. Women working without the protection of a Collective Labour Agreement (like domestic personnel) are at the mercy of their employers.

73. Supervision of the existing measures is below standard, so economic exploitation takes place especially of children who form part of socially and economically vulnerable families.

74. Since 1963, the employment of children under age 14 is prohibited by law (Labour Regulation G.B. 1963, No. 163, art. 17). Employment of youngsters under 18 and women has also been prohibited since then, if the work is dangerous or has to be done at night.

75. Children who are employed usually support their family by helping them at the workplace. This could be on the land, especially in rural areas, or in the inner city by helping out in the booths selling, for example, newspapers.

76. Orphans are financially supported by the Government by means of an orphans' allowance and through most of the Collective Labour Agreements. If this is not the case, the Government takes care by putting them in subsidized orphanages or by providing alimentation to their foster parents. Suriname has 24 Governmental and private children's homes (with a total of 209 children) and an approved school for girls. Private homes can apply for Government subsidy. Young mothers (under age) can apply for FB, AKB and GHK benefits. Physically and mentally handicapped children are considered for a higher FB benefit.

77. There is a special department of the Suriname Government to inform beneficiaries of their respective rights. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing has published two social guides containing information on Government and NGO services in the social sphere. The Ministry also provides periodic information programmes on national radio.

78. Because of the present severe crisis, the benefits provided by the Government do not satisfy the needs, even though they have recently (January and April 1993) been revised.

Article 11: Right to an adequate standard of living

79. There is not information available on the current standard of living, nor is it possible to indicate the per capita GNP for the poorest 40 per cent of the Surinamese population.

80. Since 1969 there has been a poverty line in existence in Suriname. The Central Bureau for Statistics, further called the "ABS", has determined some poverty lines according to the normative method. To attain this goal two food packages were put together. The first package consisted of foods and beverages, and the second total package consisted of the first package plus the costs for housing, medical treatment and education. The food package was put together by the Public Health Bureau. The importance of these two packages lies in the fact that in order to gain a representative poverty line, one should distinguish between families with and families without access to medical treatment and education. The figures in the table below are based on the total package.

Poverty line (in Sf per month) per household with "A" adults and "C" children

A	C 0		1		2		3		4	
	1988	1993	1988	1993	1988	1993	1988	1993	1988	1993
1	379	970	607	1 500	824	2 000	1 037	2 490	1 247	3 000
2	600	1 540	828	2 060	1 045	2 560	1 258	3 050	1 468	3 540
3	758	2 010	1 013	2 540	1 230	3 030	1 442	3 520	1 653	4 010
4	950	2 430	1 178	2 960	1 394	3 460	1 607	3 950	1 818	4 430
5	1 101	2 820	1 329	3 340	1 506	3 840	1 759	4 330	1 969	4 820

Source: Central Bureau for Statistics (ABS) as per 1 January 1993. The figures for 1993 are tentative.

81. The basis for these poverty lines of the ABS is a basic food package put together by food scientists of the Public Health Bureau (BOG). The costs for this package were calculated by the ABS and the result is presented in the table above.

The right to adequate food

82. In general, because of the current socio-economic situation, the nutritional status of the Surinamese population is declining. Data are available from surveys carried out by the Public Health Bureau (BOG). In 1992 a paper was written by M. Verwey, entitled "Food and Nutrition". In 1990 the "Food and Nutrition Committee" was installed by the Minister of Health, consisting of representatives of the Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture, Social Affairs, Trade and Commerce, and the Bureau of Statistics.

83. Because of the enormous increase in food prices, people with low incomes have particular difficulties in obtaining adequate food. Also because of the internal war and the urbanization going with it, agriculture has diminished. The most detailed information available concerns malnutrition cases amongst children under age 5, surveyed in the period 1990-1992:

Hospital records of malnutrition cases*

Year	Cases
1990	123
1991	114
1992	84

Source: The Food and Nutrition Country Paper, 1992.

* Since many malnourished children are not admitted to hospitals, the real number of cases is presumed to be higher.

84. The economic crisis has resulted in a decline in the cultivated area and in the production of some of the main export products (rice, fishing products, bananas). The foreign exchange deficiency has led to a situation in which there is a shortage of inputs for the productive sector, resulting in a scarcity of products and sharply increased prices.

85. A rationing system of consumer cards through which people can obtain basic food items such as flour, oil, sugar, milk and pulses is being implemented. There are school feeding programmes for children in creches and milk cards for the elderly, pregnant women and infants. Production of foods in Suriname is being encouraged as is breast-feeding.

86. The Public Health Bureau develops programmes to disseminate information on the principles of nutrition. The Regional Health Services, the Medical Health Services, government agencies, NGOs and local organizations are supposed to participate in these programmes. Still, nutrition education should be given more attention and current programmes within the Ministries of Health and Agriculture should be intensified.

The right to adequate housing

87. No recent data are available. In 1989, about 15,000 persons were in need of adequate housing and registered as such by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing.

88. Since homeless persons are not registered, no information is available on their numbers.

89. The number of houses without access to basic amenities such as water and electricity are indicated in the table below:

Indication of housing quality (1980)

	No.	%
Houses without water	38 211	55.2
Houses without sanitation facilities	37 767	54.5
Houses without electricity	8 065	11.6
Less suitable houses	15 111	21.8
Dilapidated houses	3 866	5.6

Source: The Directorate for Housing 1980.

90. Recent data are not available. The most recent data were collected in 1980. At that time the total number of houses was 69,251 in the coastal area and 8,493 huts in the interior. In the period 1986-1990, approximately 12,000 people fled from the interior to Paramaribo as a result of the internal war. During that same time a massive migration took place, mainly to the Netherlands. Because of the socio-economic situation, the need for cheap housing has increased in the city.

91. Several hundred families live illegally in unfinished houses, built under the social housing projects in two areas of the capital of Paramaribo. There are no figures available.

92. In January 1993, a total of 9,116 people received financial aid. The rent of the cheapest houses available through the Government Housing Foundation (SHVS) amounts to one seventh of the family income, with a minimum of Sf 30, up to about Sf 90 a month. Housing expenses are above Government-set limits. The average length of waiting time to obtain accommodation is six years.

93. The following legislation affecting the Suriname Housing policy are in existence:

Suriname Constitution, articles 17 and 49;

The Civil Code, articles 1569-1612;

The Expropriation on behalf of Public Housing Regulation (G.B. 1948, No. 1104);

Land Reform Code (Code L-S, 15 June 1982);

Unattended and obviously left plots (G.B. 1953, No. 55);

The Tenant Protection Code (G.B. 1949, No. 107);

The Town-planning Code (G.B. 1972, No. 96 and G.B. 1975, No. 63);

The Planning Code (G.B. 1973, No. 89);

The Building Code (G.B. 1956, No. 30 and G.B. 1970, No. 67);

The Building Resolution (G.B. 1956, No. 108);

The Expropriation Regulation (G.B. 1904, No. 37).

94. There are plans to involve NGOs in building activities.

95. The present Social Housing Programme has the following approach:

I. Self building projects for those with an income between Sf 600 and Sf 700 a month;

II. Social building project for those who own a plot and earn less than Sf 700 a month;

III. Public building project for families with a monthly income of less than Sf 1,000. The Government offers a financing programme for the above-mentioned projects.

96. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing considers steps to update the already existing legislation, in order to take measures against the owners of unutilized and underutilized or misutilized land.

97. The estimated budgets for housing are:

	1993	1994
Self building projects	366 000	370 000
Social building projects	3 816 000	6 819 000
Public building projects	1 151 000	1 536 000

Source: Directorate for Housing.

98. In the Structural Adjustment Programme there is a special section to fulfil the needs of the most disadvantaged groups in need of adequate housing.

99. There are no measures taken by the Government to encourage the development of small and intermediate urban centres besides the ones already existing. No measures are taken by the Government concerning urban renewal programmes, etc.

100. Technical and financial assistance are necessary in order to complete the unfinished government housing projects for the needy. Technical assistance should primarily be directed towards:

Renovation activities;

Formulating a housing programme and a town plan;

Drawing up a modern land-registry system;

Improving the production of local building materials;

Gathering of statistical data;

Reorganization of the Government Housing Foundation;

Training and guiding of NGOs in the field of housing programmes in order to increase their know-how and to improve the mutual cooperation in this field.

Article 12: Right to physical and mental health

101. As apart of the National Health Policy, a commitment was made to the WHO primary health care approach. Primary health care is performed by the Regional Health Services in the coastal area and in the interior, which borders the Amazon region. The medical mission of the Moravian Church is executing a health care policy according to government guidelines concerning primary health care. Community participation is stimulated.

102. An average of 8 per cent of GDP is spent on health, of which 52 per cent for the secondary and tertiary health care and 48 per cent for primary health care (1991); five years ago the percentage of GDP spent on health was 6.2 per cent.

103. The infant mortality rate in 1991 was 21 per 1,000 live births. Detailed information is not available.

104. In Paramaribo and some communities in the coastal area it is estimated that 75 per cent of the population has access to safe water. In the interior there are some villages with water pumps but not every village has the availability of these facilities. People living in the latter use water from the rivers, or rainwater.

105. Population access to adequate excreta disposal facilities:

estimated access total population:	62%
estimated urban population:	78%
estimated rural population:	48%

Detailed information by urban/rural area and by sex is not available.

106. Infants immunized against diphtheria, poliomyelitis, tetanus and pertussis; 76 per cent (1991) and measles: 85 per cent (1991). There is no specific programme on vaccines for tuberculosis, due to a low-level index on tuberculosis. The preventive actions are merely directed towards contacts of patients.

107. Life expectancy for the total population by sex: men 62.3 years, women 70.2 years (65.2 years the average for both sexes). Detailed information by socio-economic group or urban/rural area is not available.

108. Almost 90 per cent of the population has access to health care provided by qualified medical personnel.

109. The proportion of pregnant women having access to trained medical personnel during pregnancy is unknown, but 80 per cent of deliveries take place in hospitals with the assistance of adequately trained personnel. Maternal mortality rate (1991): 21 per 10,000 live births; maternal mortality before birth (1991 + 1992): 26.2. Ninety per cent of infants have access to qualified medical personnel for health care.

110. The health condition of refugees from the interior who, because of the internal war between 1986 and 1992 migrated to the capital, is worse than that of the rest of the population. The most adequate measure considered necessary for these groups to improve their living situation is to create conditions for them to return to their home villages, where there is a highly-developed system of community participation and where almost every village has its own local health worker.

111. It can be stated that the Surinamese health facilities are available for everyone, without discrimination. For the people living in the interior, medical services are available through the Medische Zending (Medical Mission), which operates primarily in the interior. The activities of the Medical Mission are fully subsidized by the Government of Suriname (budget of the Ministry of Health).

112. One of the measures taken to reduce infant mortality is to train more midwives and to improve health education for pregnant women. Also, the Department of Perinatology is developing standards for perinatal care. The care of children between 0-5 years is stimulated in well-equipped baby clinics and in all the health centres.

113. At present, the rising costs of health care are a problem for the population. The Government takes care of groups which cannot afford to pay the costs. The government employees and their families are insured through a State health insurance programme (SZF). Those working in the private sector have access to health services provided by the enterprises. There are also private health insurance companies, which have special arrangements for health insurance (see under art. 9 above).

114. One of the measures in the context of community participation is the improvement of health education for the community in order to make people more aware of their health problems and of the possible ways to participate in the process to solve these problems. Special programmes are implemented in order to observe how the participation of their community could achieve more success. A pilot project concerning health education is ongoing. Community participation is used as a part of environmental control measures. A study concentrated on local key figures is ongoing.

115. There are weekly information programmes on television on the origin of different diseases, how to prevent them, and on the necessary treatment (the SZF Doctor programme). In addition, articles are written in the newspapers on several diseases. The media (television, newspaper, radio) are also involved in disseminating information concerning immunization programmes and how to prevent diseases like malaria, cholera and dengue fever.

116. As Suriname is a member of the Pan American Health Organization of WHO (WHO/PAHO), several projects implemented within the framework of a cooperation programme are funded by these organizations. Other international organizations which assist, either through grants or through technical assistance in the field of health, are UNEP and FAO.

Article 13: Right to education

117. In order to be able to discharge its obligation to provide for primary education - which is compulsory - the Ministry of Education follows a policy of decentralization of educational facilities to the various residential areas.

Regional spreading of schools in the different districts 1987

Districts	No.	%
Paramaribo	216	47.7
Wanica	61	13.5
Para	22	4.8
Commewijne	31	6.8
Marowijne	23	5.1
Saramacca	17	3.8
Coronie	4	0.9
Nickerie	40	8.8
Brokopondo	14	3.1
Sipaliwini	25	5.5
Total	453	100.0

Source: Ministry of Education, 1987.

118. The policy includes the construction of schools in rural areas and the interior, together with housing facilities for teachers. Decentralization of junior secondary education is being undertaken by the Ministry of Education, albeit under difficult circumstances, such as the lack of accommodation and the lack of teachers. Furthermore, a (co-educational) boarding school has been built in Paramaribo for students of senior secondary schools who come from outlying districts, which lack facilities for such continued education.

119. Technical and vocational secondary education is generally available and accessible to all, and free of charge. It must be noted that in some parts of the country there are no provisions for this form of education because of budgetary and logistical problems.

120. University education is free of charge in Suriname, except for an entrance fee. Suriname has a university with three faculties, namely the Faculty for Social Sciences, the Faculty for Technology and the Faculty of Medical Sciences. There are five research institutions in the fields of social studies, agriculture, medicine and technology.

121. The Ministry of Education has no special programmes for drop-outs from primary education. The Ministry of Labour has training facilities for this category, through its vocational training programmes.

122. Education is a problem in the interior. As a consequence of the insurrectional movement, the infrastructure for education has been destroyed. The posting of qualified teachers in the existing schools is another problem. Sawmills have now been made available, which will enable the local population to produce part of the necessary materials to repair the infrastructure. At

present, teachers in the interior are granted an extra allowance and not fully qualified teachers are being upgraded. Another problem is the infrastructure in the coastal area, especially in the rainy seasons.

123. Statistics on the school year, 1990/91 are presented in annex 14.

124. About 20 per cent of the national budget is spent each year on education.

125. For a description of the school system, see the appended outline in annex 2.

126. The Government has a special school construction programme. Schools are also built in the interior by NGOs, with government cooperation.

127. Primary schools are built as close as possible to populated areas throughout the country. Junior secondary schools (grades 7 through 10) are spread throughout the different districts, with the exception of the interior. Senior secondary/university preparatory schools are only available in Paramaribo and the rural district of Nickerie (west of the coastal area). Higher professional education is only available in Paramaribo.

128. The school hours are:

Primary school:

nursery school	08.00 - 12.00 hours
grades 1 + 2	08.00 - 12.30 hours
grades 3 to 6	08.00 - 13.00 hours
special education	08.00 - 12.30 hours

Secondary school:

junior pre-vocational	07.30 - 12.30 hours
junior secondary general	08.00 - 13.00 hours
senior secondary	07.00 - 13.00 hours

The school year begins in October and runs up to mid-August

Vacations:

Christmas	about two weeks
Easter	about two weeks
Summer	about six weeks

129. In general, access to all schools within the educational system is equal for boys and girls. Literacy is promoted by the Ministry of Education through classes for adult illiterates and drop-outs from the basic schools. The classes are concentrated in the capital and in two other districts. The Ministry is considering a programme to extend these services nationwide. These measures also include the socially deprived and in general, there is no exclusion of anyone from enjoying the right to education.

130. Government measures to promote education:

Book grants;
Scholarships;
Fellowships;
training abroad.

131. The language used in schools is Dutch.

132. Teachers are among the highest paid groups in government service. Beside salaries, the following services are available to teachers:

A premium and deprivation allowance for teachers working in the interior;

Free housing for teachers in the outlying districts and the interior.

133. Number of schools of each category:

	No.	%
Primary schools	295	50
Junior secondary schools	97	50
Special education	9	40
Senior secondary schools	14	10
Higher education	2	0

The percentages are related to the schools at the different levels which are not established or administered by the Surinamese Government. Almost all the schools which are not administered by the Government are related to the different religious groups in Suriname, some being Catholics, Moslems and Hindus. No difficulties have been encountered by those wishing to gain access to these schools.

134. No changes in national policies, laws and practices negatively affect the right to education.

135. After Suriname gained independence in 1975, efforts were made to improve the educational system in a systematic and fundamental manner. Support has been received these past 17 years from various organizations, namely:

(a) United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO provided funds for the first comprehensive sector study on education in Suriname and also to strengthen and develop the existing mechanism for research, planning and training in the Ministry of Education and to promote innovation and change in education, In addition, UNESCO provided funds to finance the preparation of the Suriname National Literacy Campaign, implemented in the period 1984, and called "Alfa '84". Recently, UNESCO provided funds for several projects in the cultural area. Besides these forms of cooperation and support, collaboration with the Major Project in the Field

of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean should most certainly be mentioned in this respect;

(b) Organization of American States (OAS). OAS has provided funds for several projects in the field of basic educational and vocational training;

(c) European Economic Community (EEC). EEC has provided funds for the financing of school facilities;

(d) Government of the Netherlands. In the framework of the 1975 Development Treaty concluded between the Government of Suriname and the Netherlands. Dutch aid was committed for several projects in the education sector. These funds have been utilized, among other things, to finance literacy courses and the renewal of the primary school curricula. Recently, a document was prepared with some 27 project proposals, of which 9 have already been approved.

Article 14: Primary education free of charge

136. As compulsory and free education is enjoyed in Suriname. This article is not applicable to Suriname. In this respect, reference can be made to article 38, section 2 and 4, and article 39 of the Constitution which read as follows:

Article 38, section 2:

"The provision of education shall be free, subject to State control of all public educational institutions in keeping with the national education policy and the rules regarding education laid down by the State."

Section 4:

"The State shall promote the kind of education and the conditions under which school education and other forms of education can contribute to the development of a democratic and socially just society."

Article 39:

"1. The State shall recognize and guarantee the right of all citizens to education and shall offer them equal opportunities for schooling.

2. In the execution of its education policy the State shall be obliged:

(a) to ensure obligatory and free general primary education;

(b) to ensure continuous education and end illiteracy;

(c) to enable all citizens to attain the highest levels of education, scientific research and artistic creation, in accordance with their capacities;

(d) to provide, in phases, free education at all levels;

(e) to attune education to the productive and social needs of the society."

Article 15: Right to take part in cultural life and enjoy the benefits of scientific progress

137. There is almost no legislation concerning culture. If there are any laws concerning cultural life, they have been taken from the Constitution.

138. Part of the government budget was allocated to stimulate private initiatives in the cultural field. Cultural bodies which are totally subsidized by the Government should play a main role in the implementation of the cultural policy.

139. The Directorate for Culture of the Ministry of Education is headed by a director, and supported by two deputy directors. The Directorate consists of nine departments responsible for specific areas i.e.:

Public relations;

Research, planning and documentation;

General cultural affairs;

Cultural relations;

Cultural studies;

Cultural and community centres;

Museums;

Archaeological services;

Cultural and creative education.

140. The Government promotes cultural identity and the participation in social and cultural life within the society. The Government employs professional cultural workers in community centres located throughout the country, who work to promote cultural identity and cultural and creative education.

141. The mass media are a great support for the promotion of participation in cultural life. Activities of cultural groups are promoted through advertisements and programmes on radio and television and in newspaper articles, without Government interference. On one of the national TV stations a Cultural Agenda is presented, which is co-sponsored by the Directorate of Culture, informing the public daily on cultural activities taking place in the country.

142. Suriname has a State Art Collection. The purpose of this collection is to promote the artists and to preserve the Surinamese cultural heritage.

Literature forms part of this collection. There is a commission for quality control of art items, using international standards to check the items on their quality. There is also a foundation especially for monuments in Suriname. Its main task is to make an inventory of all monuments on their historic value and see to it that these monuments remain part of the Surinamese cultural heritage.

143. There are no restrictions on the freedom of cultural expression and artistic performance.

144. Professional education in the field of art and culture is guaranteed by the exploitation of the State-run Academy for Higher Arts and Culture Education (AHKCO), for the training of Surinamese citizens at a higher professional level in the field of arts and crafts, painting and journalism.

145. The National School of Music is an NGO which trains people at lower and middle level in the field of music.

146. Other measures to preserve the cultural heritage are all taken on a private basis, sometimes with government support, such as courses, seminars and exhibitions.

- - - - -